

USDA's decision comes at the Representatives' request to help New Jersey farmers

Washington, DC - Today, Representatives John Adler and Frank LoBiondo applauded the Department of Agriculture's decision to purchase up to \$14.7 million worth of cultivated blueberry products for federal nutrition assistance programs. Back in April, Adler and LoBiondo wrote Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack requesting that he purchase surplus blueberries.

"Finally, the federal government sides with New Jersey," said Congressman Adler. "This decision will benefit Southern New Jersey's economy. I am pleased that the USDA listened and decided to purchase delicious, healthy blueberries from our local farmers."

"South Jersey's blueberry crop is a key economic component of our region's agricultural industry and yields tens of millions of dollars in revenue annually. I am pleased by the USDA's decision, which will benefit our farmers and federal nutrition programs," said LoBiondo. "I also want to applaud the contributions of our farmers to local food banks, which have certainly made a difference in these challenging economic times."

New Jersey is the country's second largest producer of highbush blueberries. The \$14.7 million allocations will purchase approximately 17.5 million pounds of blueberries for federal nutrition programs, including the School Lunch Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

The letter that Representatives Adler and LoBiondo sent to Secretary Vilsack can be found [here](#) .